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Jean Gran-Aymerich, *Les vases de bucchero: le monde étrusque entre orient et occident* (Bibliotheca archaeologica 55). Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2017. pp. 287; 392 pp. of plates; illus., maps. 1 CD-ROM. isbn9788891308177. 450.00. (Review)

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JEAN GRAN-AYMERICH, *LES VASES DE BUCCHERO: LE MONDE ÉTRUSQUE ENTRE ORIENT ET OCCIDENT* (Bibliotheca archaeologica 55). Rome: “L’Erma” di Bretschneider, 2017. Pp. 287; 392 p. of plates; illus., maps. 1 CD-ROM. ISBN 9788891308177. €450.00.

Jean Gran-Aymerich’s book is the first comprehensive attempt at an overall synthesis of bucchero production. It includes seven chapters, with extensive illustrations at the end of each, and a summary in English at the start. Ch. 1 considers the name ‘bucchero’ and a history of bucchero studies, with an emphasis on French contributions. Possible ancient representations of bucchero and written sources are also briefly discussed.

Ch. 2 is concerned with the techniques of making bucchero, derived from earlier *impasto* wares. G.-A. discusses the gradual adoption of the potter’s wheel, the assembly of vessels and their burnishing, without considering the process of turning vessels when leather-dry that was responsible for much of the characteristic detailing of bucchero shapes. The inconclusive evidence for firing, production of the characteristic black surface, scientific analysis of clays and experimental firing are then discussed. A very detailed section follows that analyses the wide range of bucchero decorative techniques. These are cross-referenced to the typology (presented in ch. 3) and production centres (discussed in ch. 5), which helps the reader identify specific types of bucchero.

Ch. 3 sets out G.-A.’s typology, developed from the 1970s onwards, comprising 1,600 bucchero shapes. G.-A. follows the same numerical and hierarchical system developed by Jean-Paul Morel, *Céramique campanienne: les formes* (1981) for later black-gloss wares. The typology is presented in 190 plates, and fills 62 printed pages; but even this is only an abridged version of the typology. The CD-ROM contains an expanded version of 307 pages, with the printed text in blue and additions in black.

The volume is a summation of G.-A.’s and others’ previous publications. The typology is derived from complete vessels, but will be more difficult to use with fragmentary sherds, since plain everted rims or pieces of strap handle – often the commonest finds – are separated at the highest level of the typology. A plain everted rim sherd could be identified as form 1000, 2800, 3000, 4400 or 5000, which could correspond to a plate, chalice, *amphoretta*, chalice, cup, jug, *olpe* or *oenochoe*.

Ch. 4 is a pioneering synthesis of all forms of decoration on bucchero, including inscriptions. Motifs rather than techniques (in ch. 2) determine the classification: so, for example, incised,

stamped and relief moulded lions are grouped together. This systemisation of motifs masks some well-established decorative traditions – so, for example, cylinder-seal-stamped vessels from Tarquinia and Orvieto are not classified as a distinct type of decoration. More cross-referencing to previously published analyses would have been helpful. Here, the desire to definitively categorise all bucchero tends to obscure difference, rather than define distinct types.

Ch. 5 concerns the traditional categories of bucchero – *sottile*, transitional and *pesante* along with the problematic categorisation of ‘*buccheroide*’ wares. Often the boundaries are difficult to pin down, and this section relates current orthodoxy rather than a reinterpretation derived from G.-A.’s new typology. Seven synthetic phases of development combine dating, technique, decoration, form and place of production to create a framework for identifying bucchero. This should have been cross-referenced to the typology, in order to facilitate checking that a morphological identification matches the characteristics of the correct phase of development. G.-A. provides a date for each shape in the typology, but these do not neatly coincide with the seven phases of development. G.-A. then considers a third layer of complexity, the places of production, providing the most detailed account currently available of the origin of bucchero in Caere in the early seventh century and its rapid diversification to other centres in Etruria. This is helpfully cross-referenced to the typological forms where possible. The output of each workshop is described, making this chapter a helpful guide to the production place of at least some bucchero vessels. Their variation is integrated within the unifying typology, reversing a recent scholarly tendency to differentiate local varieties made in various centres.

Ch. 6 traces the development of bucchero as a prestige good from the earliest handcrafted pieces, through limited ‘remarkable’ vessels to larger scale wheel-made productions. An innovative section raises the question of ‘sets’ of bucchero vessels, seeking recurring combinations of vessels that might reflect their use in tombs, sanctuaries and settlements. This wide-ranging chapter then discusses the bidirectional relationship between bucchero and metalwork, countering the view that bucchero simply imitated metal shapes.

Ch. 7 discusses the Italic, Near Eastern and Greek influences in a series of under-developed thematic essays on shapes, narrative and mythological scenes on some bucchero. This is followed by an encyclopaedic gazetteer of the distribution patterns of bucchero around the

Mediterranean; bringing this scholarship together provides the clearest available picture of the extent of Etruscan influence around the Mediterranean.

There are detailed contents at the end of the volume (without page numbers); there is no index. The book is lavishly illustrated with more pages of figures than text. However, there are minimal captions, and reader must refer to the PDF file on the CD-ROM to discover the find spot, museum inventory and reference for those images taken from other publications. Some illustrations are not referred to in the text, and others seem misplaced; some are duplicates, and a good number are heavily pixelated. The CD-ROM contains PDF files of the complete bibliography (the book has a select bibliography), illustration captions, museum lists, and endnotes that are additional to the printed footnotes. A more open format than .pdf would have been more useful; better still would have been an accessible version of the dataset of bucchero vessels. Having the whole book on the CD-ROM would also have been good; although the book is robust and printed on high quality paper, I would be hesitant to expose such an investment to the rough and tumble of the pot shed.

G.-A.'s magnum opus is a masterwork that synthesizes an extremely complex subject area, and will be an essential point of reference for at least a generation. Some of the organizational choices and idiosyncrasies of publication will make the book more difficult to consult than it should be. Nevertheless, this is the book to consult to find a parallel and context for a bucchero vessel, although G.-A.'s typology will likely be cited alongside familiar typologies rather than rapidly superseding them. Ultimately, the proof of any typology is whether it succeeds in practical use to identify and communicate variations in material culture.

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